

Oberholser, H.C. Great horned owl from Venezuela.



(1908)

A-O [Oberholser]  
Venezuela  
1908

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.



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A NEW GREAT HORNED OWL FROM VENEZUELA,  
WITH NOTES ON THE NAMES OF THE  
AMERICAN FORMS.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

A single specimen of *Bubo*, collected by Mr. George K. Cherrie in Venezuela, and now deposited in the collection of the Brooklyn Institute Museum, proves to belong to an apparently undescribed form. Through Mr. Cherrie's courtesy, I am privileged to provide it with a name; and in view of its comparatively dark coloration, it appropriately may be called:

***Bubo virginianus scotinus***, subspecies nova.

*Chars. subsp.*—Nearest *Bubo virginianus melaucerus*, from Mexico, but darker, particularly on the entire upper surface; face darker, more rufescent, legs more deeply rufous, and less heavily mottled with dusky.

*Description.*—Type, adult male, No. 5242, Museum of Brooklyn Institute; Caicara, Rio Orinoco, Venezuela, June 28, 1907; George K. Cherrie. Upper parts blackish brown, much mottled with tawny ochraceous, ochraceous buff, and buffy white; wings the same, but rather lighter, the quills irregularly barred; tail similar—dark brown, with broad irregular and broken bars of buff and ochraceous buff, narrower and somewhat ill-defined on the middle feathers; face tawny, mixed with blackish and buffy; sides of neck similar, but with more blackish markings; chin tawny, with broad black shaft markings; moustachial stripe and a transverse throat patch white; rest of lower



surface ochraceous buff or creamy white, barred with dark brown, most heavily on breast and jugulum, least so on crissum; thighs ochraceous, sparsely spotted with dusky; tarsi ochraceous buff, almost immaculate; under wing-coverts ochraceous, varied a little with whitish, and barred with dark brown; axillars whitish, somewhat mixed with buff, and barred with deep brown; iris orange yellow; bill black; feet slate gray, claws blackish. Wing, 338; tail, 184; exposed culmen, 42; culmen without cere, 28.5; tarsus, 56 mm.

This new race is of about the same size as *Bubo virginianus mesembrinus*, from Costa Rica, but differs conspicuously in its much less rufescent coloration throughout; in fact, it is much less like *B. v. mesembrinus* than like *Bubo virginianus melancerus*, from Mexico. The coarseness of its barring, particularly on the lower parts, distinguishes it readily from *Bubo virginianus nacurutu* (= *magellanicus*), as does also its darker coloration. From the recently described east Brazilian form, *Bubo virginianus deserti*\*, it may be separated by its much more rufescent colors both above and below, as well as on the face; for *B. v. deserti* is entirely gray or blackish and white, with little or no admixture of brown or ochraceous.

In a revision of the American great horned owls published a few years ago†, I employed the generic name *Asio* in place of *Bubo*, following Mr. Stone‡. Recent changes in the rules for fixing types of genera now make it possible to retain the name *Bubo*, since by tautonymy the type of *Asio* Brisson§ is a species of another genus, and *Bubo* is, therefore, apparently the earliest available name for the horned owls.

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\* *Bubo magellanicus deserti* Reiser, Anzeiger Kais. Akad. Wiss., Math.-Natur. Kl., XLII, 1905, No. XVIII, p. 324 (Joazeiro, Brazil).

† Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXVII, 1904, pp. 177-192.

‡ Auk, XX, 1903, pp. 272-276.

§ Ornith., I, 1760, p. 477.

The subspecific term of *Bubo virginianus magellanicus* is untenable from Gmelin\*, as usually cited, since it is there merely a varietal name under *Strix bubo*, and consequently without nomenclatural status. Furthermore, it seems not to have been employed by any other author prior to 1817, when the bird was called by Vieillot *Strix nacurutu*†, which designation, therefore, must now be revived.

The name *Asio magellanicus wapacuthu* (Gmelin)‡, used by me§ for the preoccupied *Strix (Bubo) arctica* of Swainson¶, should be replaced by *Bubo virginianus subarcticus* Hoy||, as shown by Mr. William Brewster°, for Gmelin's *Strix wapacuthu*", is apparently, after all, based upon *Nyctea nyctea*.

The New-World forms of *Bubo* are all, without doubt, subspecies of *Bubo virginianus*, and should now stand as follows :

- Bubo virginianus virginianus* (Gmelin).
- Bubo virginianus lagophonus* (Oberholser).
- Bubo virginianus icelus* (Oberholser).
- Bubo virginianus heterocnemis* (Oberholser).
- Bubo virginianus saturatus* Ridgway.
- Bubo virginianus algistus* (Oberholser).
- Bubo virginianus occidentalis* Stone.
- Bubo virginianus subarcticus* Hoy.
- Bubo virginianus pallescens* Stone.
- Bubo virginianus pacificus* Cassin.
- Bubo virginianus elachistus* Brewster.
- Bubo virginianus mayensis* Nelson.

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\* Syst. Nat., I, 1788, p. 286.

† Nouv. Dict. d' Hist. Nat., VII, 1817, p. 44.

‡ *Strix wapacuthu* Gmelin, Syst. Nat., I, 1788, p. 291.

§ Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., XXVII, 1904, p. 191.

¶ Fauna Boreali-Amer., II, 1832, p. 86.

|| *Bubo subarcticus* Hoy, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., VI, 1852, p. 211.

° Birds Cambridge Region, 1906, p. 205.

" Syst. Nat., I, 1788, p. 291.

*Bubo virginianus melancerus* (Oberholser).

*Bubo virginianus scotinus* Oberholser.

*Bubo virginianus mesembrinus* (Oberholser).

*Bubo virginianus deserti* Reiser.

*Bubo virginianus nigrescens* Berlepsch.

*Bubo virginianus nacurutu* (Vieillot).

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